THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Government of Andhra Pradesh has recently requested for taking up construction of new rail line from Cuddapah to Bangalore *via* Madanapalli. Bhadrachalam is not covered in the demand and it also does not fall on the proposed alignment.

(b) An updating survey for Cuddapah-Bangalore *via* Madanapalli new rail line has been included in the Budget 2004-05.

Simplification of the claim process

†147. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any effective steps are being taken by Government to simplify the settlement process regarding the claims of the kith and kin of the people killed in Rail accidents and claims related to the return of rail tickets and thefts of the parcels/goods;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total number of applications for such claims received by the Railways in each Railway Zone during the last three years; and

(d) the number of claims settled/pending out of the said claims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is a constant endeavour of Railway administration to explore ways and means to simplify the claims process relating to compensation to victims of rail accidents, claims related to refund of rail tickets and theft of parcels/goods. The Following steps have been taken in the recent years to exdpedite the claim settling process;

1. Accident related claims—

(i) Passenger can now file claims for compensation at the originating station, or destination station or where the ticket was purchased or the place of residence as against only at the place of occurrence of accident, as was the case earlier.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(ii) Adjournments of hearing in the Railway Claims Tribunal are restricted to a maximum of three.

(iii) The Tribunal is required to pass final orders within 21 days of final hearing.

(iv) Earlier the affidavits were attested by Notary Public.For the convenience of claimants, the Registrars have also been empowered to attest the same.

(v) The Registrar/Additional Registrars of the Tribunal monitor and see that the payment of compensation award is made expeditiously to the claimants by the Railway Administration.

2. Theft of parcels/goods

(i) In order to expedite settlement of claims, Commodity Claim Cells have been set up on Zonal Railways for claim settlement of specific commodities;

(ii) "Not-received Cells" on Zonal Railways are operating to ensure expeditions tracing and connecting of consignments which could not reach the destination within a reasonable transit time;

(iii) Full monetary powers have been delegated to General Managers for settling time barred cases; and

(iv) Claims offices are being computerized.

3. Refund of Rail Ticket

Under the normal rules, the refund on unused reserved tickets is admissible only upto certain time limits (maximum 12 hours) after departure of the train. To facilitate refund thereafter directly from the PRS terminals, the Computerised Coaching Refund Scheme has been started. Under this Scheme, refund shall be admissible on unused Reserved and RAC tickets upto 5 days from the scheduled departure of the train from its originating station. Some Zonal Railways have started granting refund under this Scheme.

(c) and (d) The total number of applications for claims received, settled* and pending* zone-wise during the last three years are as under:—

Railway	Killed in train accidents			Theft of parcels/goods			Refund of Rail Tickets**		
	Cases received	Cases settled	Cases pending	Cases received	Cases settled	Cases pending	Cases received	Cases settled	Cases pending
Central	6	45	2	0	0	0	140205	140617	388
Eastern	116	106	25	20534#	13979	6515	15561	15428	211
Northern	73	107	26	3	0	3	403261	401481	4534
North Eastern	0	2	1	0	0	0	7770	7746	60
Northeast Frontier	7	20	137	2	0	2	18416	15857	3556
Southern	17	12	0	0	0	0	166284	166416	716
South Central	64	26	41	0	0	0	86513	86357	1404
South Eastern	0	4	1	102	102	0	35361	34363	1684
Western	2	2	0	0	0	0	104895	105363	283
East Central	7	0	11	0	0	0	1345	867	507
East Coast	0	0	0	2187#	1995	192	2940	2854	152
North Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	5558	531	3545
North Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	2699	2560	205
Southeast Central	1	0	1	0	0	0	1389	1152	771
South Western	1	0	1	0	0	0	9670	9564	495
West Central	1	0	1	0	0	0	3099	26	5071
TOTAL:	295	324	247	22828	16076	6712	1004958	991182	23582

* Include cases from previous years also.

** Figures are for the Calendar years 2001, 2002 and 2003 and pendency as in April 2004.

\# Figures include cases of loss and theft both.